Community Task Force Response to Hoarding Disorder

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON HOARDING AND CLUTTERING
SAN FRANCISCO, CA

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PRESENTED BY:
MARK ODOM, LCSW
ORANGE COUNTY TASK FORCE ON HOARDING
SITE MANAGER,
WWW.HOARDINGTASKFORCE.ORG

Community Task Force Response to Hoarding Disorder

BASED UPON RESEARCH CONDUCTED BY:

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
HOARDING RESEARCH PROJECT

SLIDES COURTESY OF CHRISTIANA BRATIOTIS
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Overview

- Hoarding Task Forces
- Models of Intervention
- Successes/Challenges
  - Viability
  - Next Steps

Bratiotis, 2011

Task Forces

Collaborative, collectives, networks

Amalgamation of social planning, community organizing, development and policy advocacy
  (Roussos & Fawcett, 2000)

Diverse community stakeholders influence each other’s practices and policy to advance community level change
  (Allen, 2005)

Goal -- expand the community-wide response to a problem using a multifaceted and cross-disciplinary approach
  (Roussos & Fawcett, 2000)

Bratiotis, 2011
**HoardiNG Task Force Formation**

- **Location:** Urban, metropolitan, suburban, rural
- **Jurisdiction:** County, city, town
- **Scope:** Inter- and Intra-organizational
- **Membership:** Public, private, governmental, non-profit
- **Numbers:** 80+ in U.S. and Canada

Bratiotis, 2011

**HoardiNG Task Force Membership**

- Protective Service
- Public health
- Mental health
- First responders
- Housing
- Animal Control
- Pest management

- Nursing
- Sanitation
- Code enforcement
- Aging
- Legal
- Occupational therapy
- Professional organizers

Bratiotis, 2011
Models of Task Force Intervention

- 3 primary models of hoarding task force structure
  1. Education
  2. Case Consultation
  3. Direct Intervention

- Hybrid model combines 2 or more of the primary structures
  - i.e. Education and case consultation
  - Case consultation and direct intervention

Bratiotis, 2011

Hoarding Task Force Structure: Education

- Primary purpose is to provide education about the problem of hoarding and appropriate interventions
- 2 foci of education focused task forces:
  - 1. Internal Education: for task force members and agencies
  - 2. Community Education: for community
    - May include support groups, family education/support, trainings, symposia, etc.
- Many task forces do both forms of education
- May be a mechanism for dissemination of latest research and best practices

Bratiotis, 2011
Hoardung Task Force Structure: Case Consultation

- Primary purpose is for members of task force to discuss cases and received feedback and input
- Typically have 1-2 cases presented each meeting
- Privacy laws about protected (health) information and confidentiality apply
- Many agencies on task force share or are aware of similar cases
- Allows for professional support and use of best practices

Bratios, 2011

Hoardung Task Force Structure: Intervention

- Primary purpose is for task force to serve as the intervention/response mechanism for hoarding cases in a given community
- Pure and ad-hoc forms
  - Task force is the intervention response mechanism (rare)
  - Task force member agencies join together in intervention on cases
- Allows for coordinated response
- Community knows where to make referral and who will respond

Bratios, 2011
Successes and Challenges

- Regardless of task force structure, common success and challenges

- Member Perceptions of Task Force Successes
  - Cleared home
    “If the home has been restored to a safe condition…then we’re happy.”
  - Resource identification
    “When we find out what’s needed and get that into place then we all feel really good. It sometimes takes a lot to figure it out but then it’s worth it.”
  - Education
    “…interdisciplinary educational component is a big deal for us. We all understand now what everyone does.”
  - Task force establishment and operation
  - Hoarding as a priority issue

Bratiotis, 2011

Successes and Challenges (con’t)

- Member Perceptions of Task Force Challenges
  - Resources
    “If only everyone had more time, we can only do so much; people are doing this on top of a million other things.”
    “Far and away, it’s resources [financial].”
    “It takes a lot of coordination and staff time to keep it [task force] going.”
  - Unique to each site

Bratiotis, 2011
Viability of Hoarding Task Forces

• Seem to be a strong and appropriate response mechanism, if:
  o Consistent and dedicated leadership
  o Purpose and mission clear, reevaluated and updated
  o Supported or institutionalized with organizational support
  o ‘Turf’ issues can be ameliorated and partnerships formed
  o Individual, organizational and community needs are met
  o Voices of people who hoard and families are considered and incorporated in response
  o Willingness to do something differently

What’s Next?

• Further study of on-going need for task forces
• Effectiveness study at both organizational and personal level (those assisted by task forces)
• Communication across task forces and sharing of ideas:
   www.hoardingtaskforce.com

Bratiotis, 2011
This website is intended as an international forum for service providers and organizations to obtain and share information concerning the development and administration of collaborative, community based interventions for hoarding disorder, including animal hoarding.

www.hoardingtaskforce.org

Must register (no fee) and then be approved before access is granted to members only area

www.hoardingtaskforce.org

Forum Section

Helpers

Housing Professionals
Protective Services
Medical & Mental Health Professionals
Environmental Health/Vector/Bio Hazard Enforcement (Code, Building, Fire)
Professional Organizers
www.hoardingtaskforce.org

Forum Section

Task Force Focus
General Case Consultation Questions
Help! How do I start a Hoarding Task Force?
Challenges
Applause

Resources
News Articles / Broadcasts
Conferences
Links
Student Papers
Hoarding Related Book & Movie Reviews
General Discussion
Orange County (California) Task Force on Hoarding

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Marilyn J. Milligan, LCSW
Co-Chair, Orange County Task Force on Hoarding

ORANGE COUNTY CALIFORNIA
ORANGE COUNTY CALIFORNIA

- Primarily suburban community
- 4 + million residents
- 33 cities (each with their own code enforcement departments)
- 11 fire departments
- Social Service Agency provides Adult Protective Services and Health Care Agency provides mental health services
- 1 Vector Control District

Hoarding behavior is a complex issue that results in safety and health hazards that impact communities:

- Research efforts at several university settings have identified contributing factors for hoarding behaviors as well as innovative harm reductions strategies.
- A collaborative task force approach combined with a strategy based on harm reduction theory appears to be effective with individuals who hoard.
- The level of insight demonstrated by the person who hoards also contributes to the outcome of the harm reduction strategy.

Michael Tompkins, PhD
OC TASK FORCE ON HOARDING: A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

- OC Task Force on Hoarding evolved from the efforts of several professionals who volunteered to plan the 1st Hoarding Summits in 2004 (2 Summits attracted attendance of 500 people)
- The level of community interest stimulated the initiation of several focus groups on hoarding behavior
- In 2005 the professionals representing multiple agencies reorganized into a steering committee that initiated the OC Task Force on Hoarding
- June 2005: first meeting of the Task Force

THE ORANGE COUNTY TASK FORCE ON HOARDING

- A volunteer, advisory group of professionals
- Meets monthly to review cases and coordinate services concerning residential hoarding situations that affect the health and safety of individuals in Orange County
- Does not provide direct services but supports harm reduction strategies
THE ORANGE COUNTY TASK FORCE ON HOARDING

- Is comprised of representatives of agencies and programs that often are able to help
- Has no official mandate
- Has no employees or staff
- Has no consistent source of funding

THE ORANGE COUNTY TASK FORCE ON HOARDING

PARTICIPANTS
- Protective Service Workers
- Animal Control Officers
- Code Enforcement Officials
- Vector Control District Officers
- Senior Service Providers
- Health Care and Mental Health Providers
- University Graduate Social Work and Gerontology Interns
- Fire Department Representatives
- Housing Representatives
- Professional Organizers & Biohazard Cleaning Companies
- Attorneys
- Consumers and Family Members
THE ORANGE COUNTY TASK FORCE ON HOARDING

STRATEGIC PLANNING EMERGES AS DEVELOPMENTAL NEXT STEP

- Inconsistencies in policies and procedures between cities in Orange County became frequent frustrations for the burgeoning efforts of task force members trying to assist individuals with hoarding behaviors.

- The recognition of inconsistencies and competing demands led the Task Force to identify a consultant in 2010 to assist the steering committee in generating ideas that might contribute to changes in agency, city and county protocols.

- The Strategic Planning workgroup met regularly for three months to develop a Mission Statement and Task Force goals.
ORANGE COUNTY
TASK FORCE ON HOARDING

MISSION STATEMENT
A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT TO EFFECTIVELY IMPACT HOARDING

TASK FORCE GOALS
IDENTIFY AND UNDERSTAND THE ISSUES, DIFFICULTIES AND CAUSES OF HUMAN HOARDING BEHAVIOR
IDENTIFY, DEVELOP AND MAXIMIZE RESOURCES
DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT INNOVATIVE AND HUMANE INTERVENTIONS
EDUCATE THE PUBLIC AND SERVICE PROVIDERS
THE STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDED:

- Adoption of a uniform code such as that used by Buena Park, CA: International Property Maintenance Code (IPC)
- Development of a Resource Directory with broad distribution so that professionals and families have access to critical contact information. (Hoarding Intervention and Resource Guide continues to be updated frequently)
- Consider incorporation or affiliation with a stable organization that could provide an infrastructure

ORANGE COUNTY TASK FORCE ON HOARDING

- January 2010 – the Task Force aligns with Mental Health Association of Orange County
  501c3 Non-profit Community Based Organization
- Mission Statement:
  The Mental Health Association of Orange County is dedicated to improving the quality of life of Orange County residents impacted by mental illness through direct service, advocacy, education and information dissemination.
THE ORANGE COUNTY
TASK FORCE ON HOARDING

The Mental Health Association lends support:
 Fiscal agent for the OCTFH
 Partners on website development for OCTFH
 Provided funding to launch the International Exchange on Hoarding
 Provides meeting space as needed
 Coordinates infrastructure for major educational events

ORANGE COUNTY TASK FORCE ON HOARDING

EDUCATION
COMMUNITY OUTREACH
CLIENT SUPPORT
RESOURCES
ADVOCACY
COMMUNITY OUTREACH

RESOURCE ENHANCEMENT

Hoarding Intervention Resource Guide
Distributed by the
Orange County, California, Task Force on Hoarding
March, 2012

Countywide Services

- County of Orange Health Care Agency, Behavioral Health, Adult Mental Health Services - Services include: outreach and engagement; assessment; evaluation; individual and group therapy; collateral therapy; substance abuse treatment; medication support; rehabilitation; linkage and consultation; placement; plan development; crisis intervention and other services for individuals with serious and persistent mental illnesses.

Adult Mental Health Services Info Line: 714-834-6900
http://www.ochealthinfo.com/amhs
ADVOCACY

CLIENT SUPPORT

TEAMWORK
The strategic planning committee, cont

- Identification of hoarding “treatment specialists” who understand the principles of harm reduction and can influence intervention efforts with some consistency.
- Formation of an Executive Committee with representatives from agencies with critical influence in hoarding situations.
- Enhancement of educational activities that target professionals and the public such as the Summit, as well as train clinicians at Clinical Symposiums and provide community education when requested.
OCFA & OCTFH

Hoarding Enforcement 101

- Human Perspective
- Hoarding Scale
- Health & Safety Issues
- Firefighter Safety
- Multi-Family Residences
- Intervention
- Resources / Team Work
- Mandated Reporters
- Enforcement
Human Perspective

- Men, Women, & Children of All Ages
- Highly Intelligent
- Teachers, Engineers, Rocket Scientists...
- Friendly for the most part 😊
- Scared of Authority
- Overwhelmed, Embarrassed, Ashamed
- My Home Is My Castle... (4th Amendment)

Human Perspective

As enforcement officers we need:

- Patience
- Respect for everyone
  - Home Owner, Neighbors, Children...
  - Emotions, Feelings...
- Be non-judgmental
- Understand that hoarding is not always their choice
Health & Safety

• Health & Safety Issues are numerous in almost all cases.
  – Lack of maintenance
  – Lack of running water
  – Heating / Air-condition Non-Operational
  – Toilets / Sinks not working or inaccessible
  – Mold
  – Rodents / Insects

Firefighter Safety

• Increases risk to responding emergency personal
• Potential entrapment
• Rescue challenges / Medical aid responses
• Fire load
• Limited access / exits
• Structural issues
• Exposures
Hoardings Enforcement 101

Multi Family Homes Vs. Single Family Homes

Multi-Family Residences
Common Wall Neighbors

• Multi-Family Living Conditions
  – Can not protect themselves
  – Depend on enforcement to protect them
  – Dangers that can’t be seen (dust, mold)
  – Zoonoses: Diseases can be passed from animals
    » Cryptococcus & Psittacosis from droppings from birds
    » Lyme Disease from tics / fleas
    » Cat scratch fever from infected paws of felines
    » Hantavirus from rodent urine / droppings
R-3, Single Family Homes

- Enforcement continuity differs.

- The Orange County Fire Authority concentrates our efforts on Multi-Family homes, but will accept a case for a single family home giving direction and guidance for safe living conditions. When a level IV or V condition is found, OCFA will enforce to save lives and/or property when the hazards contribute to increased community risk.

Intervention

- Create a level of trust and rapport
- Respect the attachment to the possessions both physically and emotionally
- Need to go slowly, very gradual change
- Will require long term monitoring
- Education to family members
- Gain support from loved ones
Intervention

- Typically not an immediate crisis as behavior usually has been occurring for a long time.
- Hasty intervention will not resolve the problem.
- Intervention without cooperation may lead to the development of dangerous behavior; rage, anxiety, increased hoarding behavior.
- Careful assessment is critical.

Intervention

Successful intervention requires a collaborative multi-disciplinary approach
Resources / Teamwork
Orange County Task Force on Hoarding

- Local Police
- Animal Control
- Vector Control
- Fire Department
- Building & Safety
- City Managers Office
- City Prosecutor
- Public Works
- Health Department
- Adult / Child Protection Services
- Mental Health Services
- Family Members

Orange County Task Force on Hoarding
3rd Thursday each month
9:00 am to 10:30 am
Council on Aging, 1971 4th street, Santa Ana

Mandated Reporters

- **Mandated Reporters** are professionals who, in the ordinary course of their work and because they have regular contact with children, disabled persons, senior citizens, or other identified vulnerable populations, are required to report (or cause a report to be made) whenever financial, physical, sexual or other types of abuse has been observed or is suspected, or when there is evidence of neglect, knowledge of an incident, or an imminent risk of serious harm. (Ref. Welfare & Institutions Code 15630)

**PS. That’s You!**
Thank you...

Inspector Darren Johnson
Orange County Fire Authority
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